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Colin Mitchell



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- 1 It is generally agreed that the Chester Beatty library's 14th century copy of the *Šāh-nāme* (Per 114) and the British Library volume (Or. 2780) consisting of four later epic poems (the *Garšāsp-nāme*, the *Šāhanšāh-nāme*, the *Bahman-nāme*, and the *Kūš-nāme*) share a common provenance as a single volume. However, as Elaine Wright diligently notes and discusses, there are a number of specific oddities and exceptions regarding these works, specifically with respect to illuminations and their arrangements, which necessitate further analysis. For instance, she is struck by the singular appearance – midway in the volume – of an illumination and heading to mark the accession of Lohrāsp. She sees this less as an acclamation of Lohrāsp *per se*, and more as a reflection of how 14th century copyists were in the habit of separating *Šāh-nāmes* into two separate volumes, with Lohrāsp's reign marking the textual halfway mark. In the case of the 1397-*Šāh-nāme*, it was never physically divided yet the formal practice of using illumination and headings was faithfully replicated without any sense of its original purpose. Likewise, Wright examines how the original project had been unillustrated and that miniatures had been later introduced into the body of the manuscript. Things get slightly complicated as later artists and scribes were forced to redesign – in some cases, somewhat drastically – certain folios and their textual presentations to accommodate these new and elaborate miniatures. She examines the stylistic features of these miniatures to link their point of

origin to the Timurid court of Eskandar Solṭān, the governor of Šīrāz between 812/1409 and 814/1412. Detecting Central Asian aesthetic qualities in these inserted illustrations, Wright suggests that the Šīrāzī style *du jour* was influenced significantly by the atelier working under Eskandar Solṭān's patronage. This stylistic realignment was likely a result of Eskandar Solṭān having served as governor in Farghana since 802/1399, and his decision to relocate his retinue of administrators, scribes, artists, and copyists to Šīrāz. In this sense, we see Eskandar Solṭān emerging as a significant cultural broker between Transoxania and the Iranian Plateau.

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Thèmes : 5.1. Monde iranophone

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